REMARKS

Claims 1-22 were previously pending in the application. By the Amendment, Claims 1, 3, 6, 10, 14, 17 and 19 are currently amended, Claims 2 and 18 are cancelled without prejudice, new Claims 23-27 are added, and Claims 4-5, 7-9, 11-13, 15-16, 20-22 are currently unchanged. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that Claims 9, 10, 14 and 17 include allowable subject matter.

Allowable original Claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, newly-independent Claim 10 is allowable.

Allowable original Claim 14 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, newly-independent Claim 14 is allowable.

Allowable original Claim 17 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, newly-independent Claim 17 is allowable.

The remaining claims stand rejected under the prior art of record. Specifically, Claims 1-4, 11-13, 15-16 and 18-22 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Magnussen (EP 0 573 726 A1). Also, Claims 1-4, 12-13 and 18 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Hakim (EP 0 079 866 A1). In addition, Claims 1-8, 12-13 and 18 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Estes (US 5,815,961).

Independent Claim 1 recites a method for smoothing items of clothing, which comprises: providing an item of clothing; providing at least one gas jet for supplying a pressurized stream of a gas; subjecting the clothing item at least in one portion to the at least one gas jet in a direction not parallel to the one portion; applying a force on the clothing item with the pressurized stream of gas to smooth the clothing item; and supporting the clothing item from a side of the clothing item opposite the gas jet. Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the function of the gas jets and to add the limitations of cancelled Claim 2, which the Applicants believe was allowable in its original form.

Magnussen discloses an L-shaped tunnel finisher for treating clothes including a steam zone (23) and a drying zone (25). A band or chain conveyor (26) carries the

clothes through the steam zone (23) while steam nozzles (24) discharge steam into the steam zone (23). A worm conveyor (27) carries the clothes through the drying zone (25) having heated air for drying the clothes. Magnussen does not disclose a method for smoothing items of clothing, including: providing at least one gas jet for supplying a pressurized stream of a gas; subjecting the clothing item at least in one portion to the at least one gas jet in a direction not parallel to the one portion; applying a force on the clothing item with the pressurized stream of gas to smooth the clothing item; and supporting the clothing item from a side of the clothing item opposite the gas jet. Rather, Magnussen discloses steam nozzles (24) that discharge steam into the steam zone (23) to provide moisture and steam.

Magnussen relates to a steam chamber-type device that transports the clothes through the steam chamber, or steam zone (23). Magnussen does not disclose, among other things, providing a gas jet for supplying a pressurized stream of gas and applying a force on the clothing item with the pressurized stream of gas to smooth the clothing. Magnussen makes no mention of applying any type of force on the clothing with the steam nozzles (24).

Clothes may be smoothed by applying a combination of heat, moisture, pressure, and tension to the clothes. Magnussen only discloses applying heat and moisture to the clothes, and does not disclose applying a pressure or force on the clothing. Steam chambers for supplying heat and moisture to smooth clothing are known in the art. Magnussen primarily relates to the conveyor mechanism for transporting the clothing through the device, and does not include any indication that the steam zone (23) of the apparatus is anything other than a standard steam chamber for providing heat and moisture. Magnussen does not disclose smoothing the clothing by applying any type of pressure or force on the clothing.

For these and other reasons, Magnussen does not anticipate Claim 1, and withdrawal of the corresponding rejection is respectfully requested. Claims 3-9, 11-13 and 15-16 depend from Claim 1 and should be allowed for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

Hakim discloses an apparatus for quickly ironing clothing comprising a post having a hook holding clothing on a hanger. Water is heated within a vessel (10) to bring

the water to its vaporization temperature. The steam passes through a flexible duct to the steam delivery outlet (21). Hakim does not disclose a method for smoothing items of clothing, including: providing at least one gas jet for supplying a pressurized stream of a gas; subjecting the clothing item at least in one portion to the at least one gas jet in a direction not parallel to the one portion; applying a force on the clothing item with the pressurized stream of gas to smooth the clothing item; and supporting the clothing item from a side of the clothing item opposite the gas jet. Rather, Hakim discloses a freely hanging article of clothing that is exposed to a hand-held steam outlet to remove wrinkles from the clothing. Hakim does not disclose, among other things, supporting the clothing item from a side of the clothing item opposite the gas jet. In Hakim, a pressurized gas stream applied to the clothing would cause the clothing to swing freely on the hanger, since there is no resistance or support for the clothing. Also, Hakim does not disclose a blower or compressor to generate a pressurized flow through the steam delivery outlet.

For these and other reasons, Hakim does not anticipate Claim 1, and withdrawal of the corresponding rejection is respectfully requested. Claims 3-9, 11-13 and 15-16 depend from Claim 1 and should be allowed for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

Estes discloses a clothes treating cabinet having an inflatable hanger. The clothing item is hung on the inflatable hanger within an interior region and steam is introduced into the interior region. The inflatable hanger is then inflated to press the clothing against the cabinet inner side surfaces. Estes does not disclose a method for smoothing items of clothing, including: providing at least one gas jet for supplying a pressurized stream of a gas; subjecting the clothing item at least in one portion to the at least one gas jet in a direction not parallel to the one portion; applying a force on the clothing item with the pressurized stream of gas to smooth the clothing item; and supporting the clothing item from a side of the clothing item opposite the gas jet. Rather, Estes discloses an apparatus that physically presses a clothing item between two surfaces and provides pressure to the clothing through direct physical contact. Estes does not disclose, among other things, applying a force on the clothing item with the pressurized stream of gas to smooth the clothing item, as recited in Claim 1

For these and other reasons, Estes does not anticipate Claim 1, and withdrawal of the corresponding rejection is respectfully requested. Claims 3-9, 11-13 and 15-16 depend from Claim 1 and should be allowed for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

Independent Claim 19 recites an apparatus for smoothing items of clothing, comprising: a treatment housing defining a treatment space therein; devices disposed in said housing for placing an item of clothing inside said treatment space; a blower for generating a gas flow; and nozzles communicating with said blower for generating a pressurized gas stream in said housing, said nozzles being disposed in said housing and being aligned to direct said gas stream generated by said gas flow from said blower at the clothing item and said gas stream applying a pressure on the clothing item.

Magnussen discloses an L-shaped tunnel finisher for treating clothes including a steam zone (23) and a drying zone (25). A band or chain conveyor (26) carries the clothes through the steam zone (23) while steam nozzles (24) discharge steam into the steam zone (23). A worm conveyor (27) carries the clothes through the drying zone (25) having heated air for drying the clothes. Magnussen does not disclose a blower for generating a gas flow; and nozzles communicating with said blower for generating a pressurized gas stream in said housing, said nozzles being disposed in said housing and being aligned to direct said gas stream generated by said gas flow from said blower at the clothing item and said gas stream applying a pressure on the clothing item. Rather, Magnussen discloses steam nozzles (24) that discharge steam into the steam zone (23). There is no indication in Magnussen that the steam nozzles (24) provide a pressurized gas stream that applies a pressure on the clothing item to smooth the clothing item. Also, Magnussen does not disclose a blower for generating a pressurized gas stream.

For these and other reasons, Magnussen does not anticipate Claim 19, and withdrawal of the corresponding rejection is respectfully requested. Claims 20-22 depend from Claim 19 and should be allowed for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

New Independent Claim 23 a method for smoothing items of clothing, which comprises the acts of: providing a clothing item having a first side and a second side opposite the first side; providing a gas jet for supplying a pressurized gas stream;

subjecting the clothing item to the gas jet; applying a first force on the first side of the clothing item with the pressurized gas stream to smooth the clothing item; and supporting the clothing item with a second force on the second side of the clothing item that opposes the first force. The prior art does not teach or suggest a method for smoothing items of clothing including the combination of acts as recited in Claim 23. As discussed above, the prior art does not disclose applying a force or pressure on a side of a clothing item with a pressurized gas stream and supporting the item with an opposing force on an opposite side of the clothing. Therefore, the Applicants request allowance of Claim 23. New Claims 24-27 depend from Claim 23 and are allowable for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 1, 3-17 and 19-27 are respectfully requested. Please note the enclosed Supplemental Application Data Sheet has been updated to provide additional attorney contacts. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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March 1, 2005

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